

"FARMINGTON"

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COLES COUNTY

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Illinois

Coles County

Farmington

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Group Reorganizes to Restore Lincoln Cabin in Cole County

Completion of the reorganization of the Abraham Lincoln Log Cabin Association, which in the '90s brought Lincoln's Illinois log cabin to Chicago for exhibition and now seeks to restore it on its Cole county site as part of a Lincoln shrine, was announced today by its officers.

The reorganized association has obtained incorporation papers, assembled a staff of workers and elected Mrs. Eleanor Gridley, 5844 Harper avenue, president. Mrs. Gridley visited the log cabin, which was near Mattoon, in 1891, sixty years after Abe and his father raised it on Illinois soil. She remained there for several weeks and supervised removal of its timbers to Chicago, where it was to have been rebuilt as part of the world's fair. These plans went awry, though the Lincoln log cabin was exhibited temporarily in the old Exposition building on the lake front and was visited by hundreds before it was dismantled because of the razing of the building.

Sees Dream Near Realization.

From that time until today Mrs. Gridley has never ceased to plan for the restoration of the historic cabin on its original ground, and at last she feels that her dream is near realization.

"Now that the state of Illinois has acquired the Lincoln farm and an additional tract of land," said Mrs. Gridley, "the Lincoln state park, with the homestead log cabin rebuilt on the original site, will constitute another Lincoln shrine."

Times have changed since June 17, 1891, when Mrs. Gridley and her companions left the railroad at Mattoon and after some delay hired a vehicle

and a span of horses which took them to the rarely visited homestead.

Highway to Pass Shrine.

"The Lincoln Memorial highway," said Mrs. Gridley, "from the log cabin where Lincoln was born at Hodginsville, Ky., and following the trail of the Lincolns, will pass by the Coles county shrine.

"A legion of tourists will visit the log cabin. Perhaps it will impress them as in 1891 it impressed the confederate veteran in our party. He removed his hat, pointed to the dilapidated cabin, and after a moment of profound silence said, 'In mute but wondrous eloquence it stands.'"

As a secondary objective the reorganized association contemplates the establishment of an Abraham Lincoln information center for the preservation and study of Lincoln relics. As a nucleus toward the proposed public collection Mrs. Gridley has in her own possession now the spinning wheel used by Nancy Hanks and the life mask of Abraham Lincoln. These, she has indicated, she will turn over to the information bureau when the time is ripe.

A Great Store in a Great City

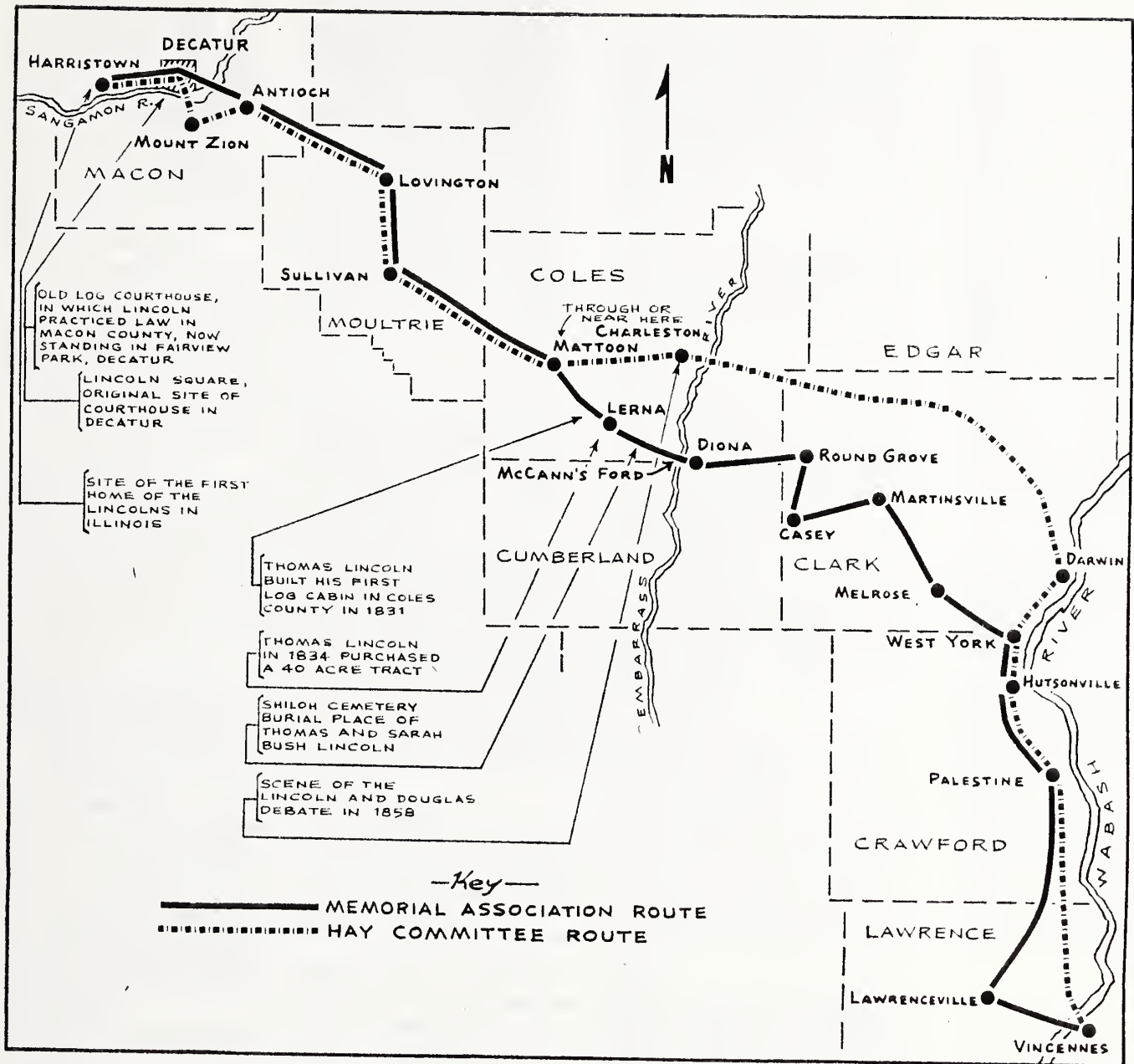
THE FAIR

State, Adams and Dearborn St.
Oak Park—Lake at Marion St. Milwaukee

The Trend Is to The Fair Where Lower

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Lincoln's Trail from Indiana — Two studies resulted in some disagreement.

Lincoln Walks in Controversy

By Otto R. Kyle

For the Herald and Review

"When one is on a Lincoln pilgrimage, he has the first sense of being in living Lincoln country when he reaches Decatur."

So wrote Ida M. Tarbell in her book, "In the Footsteps of the Lincolns," published in 1924, after she had traveled the Lincoln trail at the turn of the century.

To follow the exact footsteps of the Lincolns from Kentucky through Indiana to Central Illinois has been declared an impossible task by at least one group of Lincoln scholars who spent nine months listening to many persons studying old maps for roads and trails, looking over land grants to locate early settlements.

Efforts have been made many times to establish the exact route in the last 70 years and each time it has been impossible to reach an agreement on an exact historic route. It seems likely at this late date the exact route never will be ascertained.

Ida M. Tarbell started in 1900 studying the Lincoln route to Illinois. Immediately she found there was a dispute in Kentucky as to how and what way the Lincolns traveled from their Knob Creek home to the Ohio River.

The Lincoln Trail in Indiana seems fairly well established as authentic all the way from New Harmony to Vincennes.

At Vincennes the trouble starts.

Did the Lincolns cross the Wabash River at Vincennes or somewhere along the five mile stretch north of there?

Most investigators have accepted Vincennes.

In Illinois, Charles M. Thompson made an "Investigation of the Lincoln Way" and his report was sent to the Illinois Legislature in 1915 by the Illinois State Historical Library. Thompson had as much difficulty as those who were to follow him but he finally decided the route was through the following points:

From a point on the Illinois bank of the Wabash River opposite Vincennes, Lawrenceville, Christian Settlement, Russellville, Palestine, Hutsonville, York, Darwin, Richwoods, McCann's Ford, Paradise, Mattoon, Dead Man's Grove, Nelson, Decatur, to Lincoln Farm in Macon County.

The Thompson report was a basic document for many years and continues to be consulted. Differences of opinion, from hand-ed-down stories, of places the Lincolns were reported to have stopped, left several sections to be decided as a compromise.

On May 20, 1929, there came from the Illinois Legislature a unanimously passed joint resolution asking Gov. Louis L. Emmerson to instruct the Department of Public Works and Buildings to recommend the route for a Lincoln National Memorial Highway.

A Memorial Association was formed with an executive committee headed by James M. Weaver of Oakford as chairman and E. O. McCann of Decatur Herald and Review as secretary. A routing committee with Allen T. Lucas as

chairman was named and an Illinois route studied. All available history on the subject was consulted and new testimony heard.

In making its report to Governor Emmerson, July 22, 1929, the association said:

"The committee desires to state that Allen T. Lucas, historian, has in his possession more than one hundred affidavits, court files, court records and other documents collected in this investigation, which substantiate and corroborate the facts as set forth herein which will be delivered to the Department of Public Works and Buildings at any time upon request."

Strong Objections

Some of the recommendations in this report brought objections from individuals and organizations in such strength as to cause Governor Emmerson to request

Logan Hay, Otto L. Schmidt, Oliver R. Barrett, Henry Horner and Paul M. Angle, all Lincoln historians, to examine the data relative to the route traveled by the Lincolns and to recommend its findings to the Department of Public Works and Buildings.

What this special committee said in its report is of special interest and establishes the difficulty of marking an exact route. The committee investigation covered almost nine months. Again, much evidence was submitted by individuals and organizations consisting of affidavits, maps, records, statements and so forth. In addition the committee did considerable research on its own initiative.

As to a large number of the affidavits, the committee said, without impugning in any way the good faith of those who made

them: "These affidavits and statements are in such hopeless conflict as to render them confusing rather than helpful. If we should rely upon them alone, eastern Illinois would be covered by a network of so-called Lincoln routes."

There were affidavits and statements to which considerable reliability was attached. Some had been made by members of the Lincoln caravan and were embodied in the Thompson report in 1915.

Such early county records of roads and maps as were available were studied. Land entries were studied to establish routes of travel. County commissioners' reports on established roads were investigated. Every means possible was checked.

"In our opinion it is impossible to locate with absolute certainty the exact route followed by the Lincoln family. Conclusive evidence as to the complete route does not exist.

"Where such evidence is lacking, we have based our recommendations on the assumption that where alternate routes existed, one of them frequently traveled and passing through settled country, the other rarely traveled and passing through unsettled country, the Lincoln family chose the traveled route, even though its mileage was the greater of the two."

Here is one instance that illustrates problems of location in several places. The Memorial Highway association decided the Lincoln family moved westward from a point a short distance north of Hutsonville and took a northwestwardly course through Greenup in Cumberland County and Lerna in Coles County to Old Paradise.

Mrs. Chapman's Statement

"We are aware," said the committee of five, "that a statement of Mrs. Harriet Chapman, a member of the (Lincoln) party, supports this contention, but in view of Col. A. H. Chapman's report of Lincoln's own account of the journey is in direct contradiction on this point, we have relied on further factors in coming to our decision."

The point here is that two members of the Lincoln party years later did not agree on the exact route.

The committee of five disagreed in several instances with the location decided upon by the Lincoln National Memorial Highway association. The difficulties encountered in route location in the counties of Crawford, Clark, Cumberland and Coles fills many pages of the reports.

Here in Macon County, it seems likely the Lincolns arrived in Mount Zion from Lovington and followed a road from Mount Zion westerly to about Mount Gilead cemetery and then north into Decatur but there is no road there now. There are many places like this along the Lincoln Trail that cannot be accurately established.

A Lincoln Trail today, for tourists, follows established highways

to points connected with the Lincoln journey to Central Illinois and with other points with established Lincoln history during Lincoln's career in Illinois.

Such a route from Vincennes goes through Lawrenceville, Robinson and Palestine, Hutsonville, West York, Martinsville, Casey, Round Grove, Coles County points, Charleston, Mattoon, Sullivan and Decatur.

From Decatur, the route traveled by Lincoln to and from Springfield was south of the Sangamon River but is now located through Mount Pulaski, Springfield, New Salem and on to Beardstown.

Foundation Raffles Tom Lincoln Farm

CHARLESTON, Ill. (AP) — A \$100 raffle ticket could net you a historic 40-acre parcel of central Illinois farmland once tilled by Abraham Lincoln's dad. Honest.

The raffle will be held Nov. 20, and the grand prize is a Coles County farm once owned and farmed by Thomas Lincoln, the father of the 16th president of the United States.

In fact, Thomas Lincoln and his wife, Sarah, the President's stepmother, are buried not far from the farm. He purchased the land in 1837 and lived there until his death in 1851.

The drawing is being sponsored by the Lincoln Heritage Trail Foundation, an organization promoting sites connected to Honest Abe in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky. Officials hope to raise \$300,000, money sorely needed to keep the foundation running.

The land to be raffled is owned by an unidentified member of the foundation who bills the soil as "typical, good Illinois farmland."

If 5,000 tickets are sold, the owner stands to get \$200,000 and the foundation will collect the remaining \$300,000.

"We either have to make the foundation strong or it will fade away," said Bryan Marshall, vice-president of the organization.

It has operated primarily with money from the three states, but Marshall said continued support from those governments is uncertain.

Marshall said that although the foundation hopes to sell a maximum of 5,000 tickets for the Lincoln farm, the land will go even if only 2,000 tickets are sold. If sales fall short of that mark, all the money will be returned and the owner will sell the farm privately.

Abraham Lincoln Farm Auctioned

Surprisingly little interest was shown at an auction of what was reportedly the only farm owned by Abraham Lincoln.

The auction took place in August in Charleston, Ill. According to the *Mattoon (Ill.) Journal Gazette*, a Florida man had the high bid on the 30-acre farm. It was said Abe purchased the land in 1841 from his father, Thomas Lincoln.

William G. Lassiter, a commercial real estate developer from Palm Beach, Fla., bid \$2,900 an acre for Abe's farm through a broker for a total of \$87,000.

Owner Raymond Phipps, who held title to the property which is adjacent to Lincoln Log Cabin Historic Site, expressed disappointment at the price according to the newspaper.

He had inherited the property which his great-grandfather, Jacob Phipps purchased after Lincoln owned it. Auctioneer was Dean Kruse of Kruse Auction Services in Auburn, Ind.

A nearby farmer, Jim Best, was the top bidder on another 60 acres. His bids were \$1,025 an acre on a 40-tract owned by Tom Lincoln and \$950 an acre for 20 other acres. A Ft. Wayne, Ind., man had the top bids on the other 35 acres — in 20 and 15 acre parcels — at \$1,000 and \$900 an acre.

The newspaper said a combination of factors — depressed farm economy, near-drought conditions and the backroads site of the auction — were cited by auctioneers and Phipps as reasons for the lower than expected prices.

"I know of four, five or six people from out of state that said they were going to be here," Phipps said following the sale. "I'm afraid they're lost in the countryside somewhere. One fellow was lost for two hours and just got here."

Travel from Charleston, Ill., had been hampered because a bridge south of the land on Lincoln Highway was out. It apparently took one party who was forced to detour another 20 minutes to get to the park. Kruse said if the land had been "closer to Chicago or Louisville, a one million dollar sale would have been possible."

Kruse estimated the dry spell brought down the price on the 95 acres, other than Abe's farm, by \$1,000 per acre. The average price per acre on the other parcels was \$984.21.

Marion Valle, a broker from Chicago, said his client would have bid higher. "He (Lassiter) authorized me to bid up to a certain amount. I was not at the top," he said. "He would have gone a little bit higher, but not much."

Contacted by telephone at his Palm Beach home by the *Journal Gazette*, Lassiter expressed surprise that he was the top bidder on the Abe Lincoln farm.

"I think Abe Lincoln was a great American and I would like to have this farm. That was the only reason I bid on it," said Lassiter. "I'm tickled to death."

He added he has no immediate plans for the farm except to visit the site. Phipps has touted the land as a possible

Around USA

For \$87,000

Lincoln tourist development, something Lassiter said is possible, "but it's too early to tell. I haven't given it any thought. I'm so busy down here."

Lassiter said he may have authorized bids on the other tracts of land except that he didn't know enough about the quality of the land. However, he said he didn't think twice about bidding on the Lincoln tract.

(Thanks for the clipping from Sallie Bristow of Sullivan, Ill.)

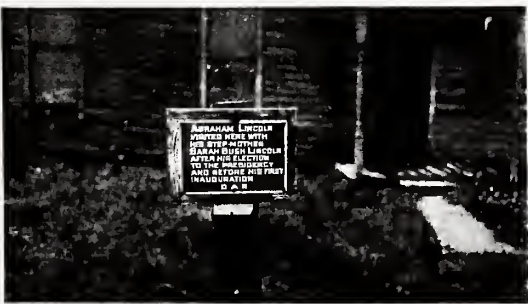
22 — Tri-State Trader — Oct. 8, 1983



Coles County, Ill.



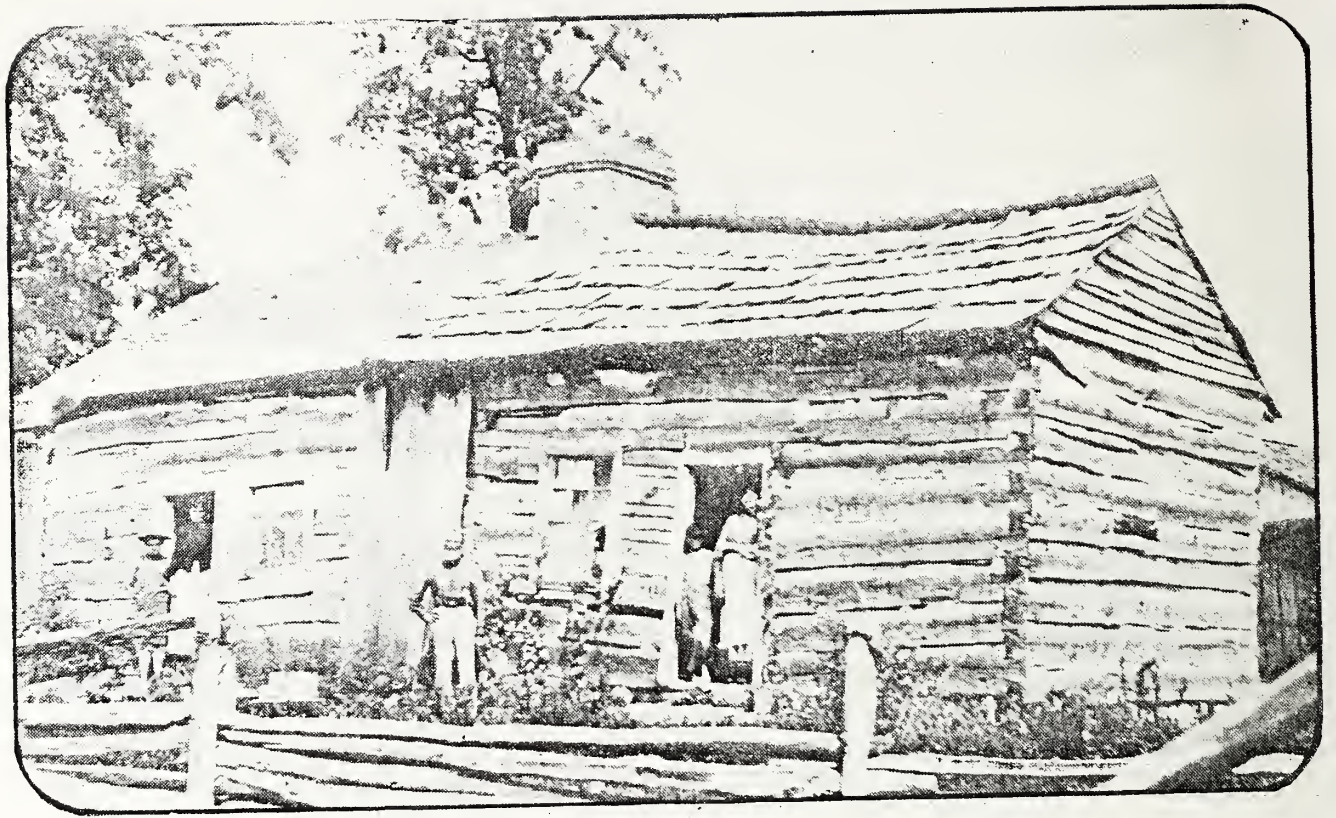
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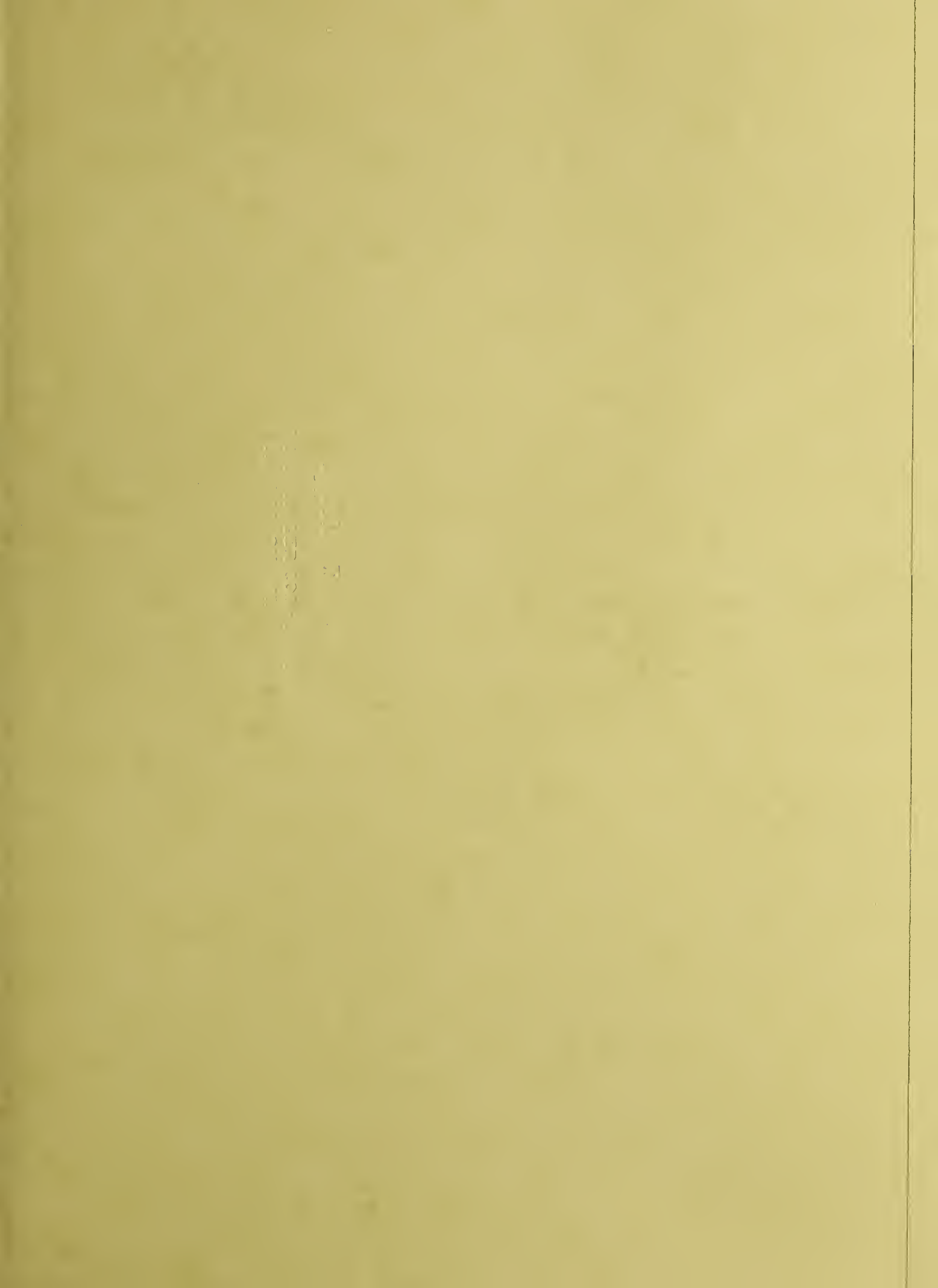


Coles County Ill.



LINCOLN'S FIRST HOME IN ILLINOIS.

In this house he was living when he became of age. The place was called Goosenest Prairie, and was near Farmington. Thomas Lincoln, his father, died here.



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